



EQUALITIES – AVJB PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

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Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

March 2013

Introduction

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (“the Board”) and the Assessor for Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (“the Assessor”) are fully committed to embracing and implementing the principles and ethos of the Equality Act 2010 and its associated Regulations such as the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

By fully adopting the principles and ethos of the Equality Act 2010, Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board will provide all electors, rate payers and council tax payers of Ayrshire and its own staff, a service provision, culture and working environment which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, where all members of our community have equal opportunities and treat each other with dignity and respect.

These are the broad aims of the Equality Act 2010 and we as a Board respect them, adopt them and uphold them. In order to confirm our commitment to these aims, this report sets out to demonstrate where Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board has already taken steps to embrace the principles of the Equality Act 2010. It will also detail the actions we are currently undertaking to embed the Equality Act 2010 into every part of our service, and finally, by developing a number of Equality Outcomes this report will consider those actions we intend to take in the future in order to continue to embrace the aims and objectives of the Equality Act 2010.

This report is in three parts, one for each of the following key areas;

- ***Equalities Mainstreaming***
- ***Workforce Monitoring***
- ***Equalities Outcomes***

The first of these areas will explain what actions the Board has, and is, taking on a day to day basis to fully embrace and implement the principles of the Equality Act 2010. The second part of this report comprises an analysis of our workforce with particular reference to the protected characteristics defined in the Act. The third part uses the information and knowledge gained from the first two sections to identify gaps in our equalities regime and thereafter develop a number of Equalities Outcomes that we aim to implement in the future in order to address these gaps. In developing our equality outcomes regard has been had to the guidance given by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Scotland that these should be proportionate and relevant to the size of the organisation.

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board has always strived to uphold and implement the principles of its existing corporate Equalities Scheme. These new provisions will allow the Board to build upon the work of its previous scheme and renew our commitment to the principles of the Equality Act 2010.



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 1

MAINSTREAMING THE EQUALITY DUTY

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board – Who Are We ?

1.0 The Board

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board has been established since 1996 and discharges jointly the responsibilities which North, South and East Ayrshire Councils hold as Valuation Authorities.

The members of the Board comprise 16 elected councillors who are appointed by the constituent authorities as follows:

<i>East Ayrshire Council</i>	<i>5 members</i>
<i>North Ayrshire Council</i>	<i>6 members</i>
<i>South Ayrshire Council</i>	<i>5 members</i>

The Board has appointed an Assessor who is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List, which are the base documents required for the three Ayrshire Councils to ingather Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.

The Board has also appointed the Assessor to be the Electoral Registration Officer and be responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Register of Electors, which is essential for all European, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer currently has a total of 46 members of staff which translates into a full time equivalent of 42.1 staff to assist in carrying out these Statutory Functions. In view of the relatively small size of the organisation support is provided to the Board in the areas of Human Resources, Financial Management, Procurement, Facilities Management & Communications and Information Technology by South Ayrshire Council.

1.1 The Service Mission, Aims and Objectives of the Board

The Service Mission of the Board is “to provide equitable, customer focussed, best value, high quality, professional valuation and electoral services for all its stakeholders”.

The aims and objectives of the Board are to:

- ***Ensure that our services are delivered in accordance with all statutory requirements.***
- ***Plan service development and delivery in accordance with the principles of Best Value and continuous improvement.***
- ***Consult our stakeholders about their needs and expectations.***
- ***Recognise our employees as both stakeholders and our most important asset.***
- ***Take individual and collective responsibility for the services provided by AVJB.***
- ***Encourage innovation and recognise achievement within the organisation.***
- ***Monitor and report performance levels to stakeholders.***
- ***Integrate equalities issues into all aspects of our service provision.***
- ***Build upon our achievements to date.***

1.2 The Scope of the Board's Functions

With respect to the Equality Duty, the functions of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board are of a limited nature and are heavily prescribed by legislation.

With regard to Council Tax, the Assessor's staff inspect and survey each new domestic property as required in order to assess the appropriate valuation band at which it should be entered on the Valuation List. Once the appropriate band is determined the details are passed to the relevant Council in order that the Council may levy Council Tax.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Council Tax is generally in order to make an appointment to inspect a property, to issue a Valuation Notice giving details of the valuation band determined and to deal with appeals and enquiries which relate to the valuation band.

With regard to Non Domestic Rates, the Assessor's staff inspect and survey new or altered properties as required in order to assess the rateable value which should be entered in the Valuation Roll. The Assessor's staff will also re-assess the rateable value of every non-domestic property as part of each general revaluation, which normally takes place every 5 years. Once determined the details of new and revised rateable values are passed to the relevant Council in order that non-domestic rates may be levied.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Non Domestic Rates is generally in order to make an appointment to inspect a property, to issue a Valuation Notice giving details of the rateable value determined and to deal with appeals and enquiries which relate to the rateable value.

With regard to Electoral Registration, the Assessor's staff undertake a canvass by issuing a canvass form by post to each household annually. In conjunction with other forms of checks, a number of door to door enquiries will also be undertaken to supplement this information. The information gathered will be used to compile the Electoral Register. In addition to the annual canvass, individuals who are qualified to do so may apply to be added to the Electoral Register throughout the year.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Electoral Registration is generally to issue canvass forms and gather the information returned, together with dealing with general enquiries and applications to be added to the Electoral Register.

The Board's core functions are heavily prescribed by statute and as a consequence these functions are freely available to all members of the public who meet the necessary statutory requirements in order for them to be entitled to those services. The Board's core functions are therefore, by their nature, non-discriminatory.

2.0 Equality Duties

In 2010 the UK Parliament introduced a new Equality Act. The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 100 separate pieces of legislation and now provides a legal framework which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are;

- ***Equal Pay Act 1970***
- ***Sex Discrimination Act 1975***
- ***Race Relations Act 1976***
- ***Disability Discrimination Act 1995***
- ***Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003***
- ***Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003***
- ***Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006***
- ***Equality Act 2006***
- ***Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007***

The Equality Act 2010 included a new public sector Equality Duty which replaced the separate duties on public bodies relating to race, disability and gender equality. It now also extends to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

Section 149 of the Act imposes a duty on public authorities when exercising public functions to have due regard to the following general duties;

- ***eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act***
- ***advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it***
- ***foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***

The above general duties are often referred to as the 'three needs'.

The Act sets out nine protected characteristics which are:

- ***Age***
- ***Disability***
- ***Gender Reassignment***
- ***Marriage and Civil Partnership***
- ***Pregnancy and Maternity***
- ***Race***
- ***Religion or Belief***
- ***Sex***
- ***Sexual Orientation***

The first 'need' of the general Equality Duty is to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.

However, the second and third 'needs' of the duty (advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations) only apply in relation to persons who share a protected characteristic.

To help meet the general duties contained within the Equality Act 2010, the Scottish Government introduced the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

The purpose of the specific duties in Scotland is to help those authorities listed in the Regulations in their performance of the general Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 requires those authorities listed in the Regulations, unless otherwise exempted, to comply with the following duties;

- ***Duty to report progress on mainstreaming the Equality Duty.***
- ***Duty to publish equality outcomes and report progress.***
- ***Duty to Equality Impact Assess Policies and Practices.***
- ***Duty to gather and use employee information.***
- ***Duty to publish gender pay gap information.*** (Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board has less than 150 employees and is therefore not subject to this duty).
- ***Duty to publish statements on equal pay.*** (Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board has less than 150 employees and is therefore not subject to this duty).
- ***Duty to consider award criteria in relation to public procurement.***
- ***Duty to publish required information in a manner which is accessible.***
- ***Duty to consider other matters.***

How Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is mainstreaming the Equality Duties will now be considered in some detail.

Despite being a very small organisation with very limited resources, the Board has adopted a number equality related practices and procedures which clearly demonstrates its commitment to mainstreaming the Equality Duties. Some examples include the following.

Top Down Involvement

Equality of treatment is a fundamental right and the Assessor and ERO has taken steps to ensure that a culture of equality is embedded in the organisation. A top down approach has been adopted and equality is a standing item on the agenda for discussion at the Assessors' monthly Management Team meetings. Any issues relating to equality matters are discussed in full and thereafter information is cascaded down from the Management Team meetings via individual team briefings.

All minutes taken at the Assessors' Management Team meetings are approved and made available to all staff via an internal IT directory.

Equal Pay

In July 2010 the Board implemented the national single status agreement for Local Authority Employees in Scotland. In accordance with this agreement all jobs have been re-evaluated to ensure that there is no gender bias. The re-evaluation was undertaken using the COSLA job evaluation model and, prior to implementation, an independent consultant was engaged to undertake an equality impact assessment of the outcomes. Following detailed analysis the consultant confirmed that the proposed outcomes were technically robust and non-discriminatory and suitable for implementation by the Board.

In conjunction with re-evaluating all posts the Board has introduced a revised pay structure and package of terms and conditions of employment. Again the pay structure and package of terms and conditions have been endorsed by the consultant as non-discriminatory in terms of their proposed application.

An integral element of the revised pay structure and package of the terms and conditions is a range of policies which are aimed at, amongst other things, eliminating discrimination and promoting an appropriate work life balance.

Having reviewed the pay structure, the terms and conditions and the equal pay related policies and procedures currently in place, the Board is satisfied that these are non-discriminatory and meet the Board's Equality Duties. However, the Board also recognises that it is important to continue to monitor these provisions and, with the support of South Ayrshire Council, will continue to update these and develop new policies as required.

Policies and Procedures

The Board has a range of policies and procedures in place, many of which are aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. Some of the Board's policies and procedures aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting equality are detailed below:

- ***A Framework for Maximising Attendance at Work***
- ***Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)***
- ***Adverse Weather Guidance for Employees***
- ***Anti Fraud and Corruption***
- ***Breaks at Work***
- ***Code of Conduct for Employees***
- ***Code of Practice for Temporary Workers***
- ***Computer Use***
- ***Concerns at Work (Whistle Blowing)***
- ***Customer Comments and Complaints Procedure***
- ***Disciplinary Policy***
- ***Employee Retirement Framework***
- ***Enhanced Leave Scheme***
- ***Equalities***
- ***Equalities Scheme 2010***
- ***Exit Interviews***
- ***Flexible Retirement***
- ***Flexible Working***
- ***Flexi-Time Scheme***
- ***Grievances***
- ***Health and Safety***
- ***ICT Acceptable Use Policy***
- ***Internet (Rules for Use)***
- ***Job Sharing***
- ***Managing Workforce Change***
- ***Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave and Pay***
- ***Occupational Health Guidelines***
- ***Recruitment and Selection***
- ***Respect at Work, Harassment and Bullying***
- ***Special Leave***
- ***Stress***
- ***Supporting Employees in Managing Addiction***
- ***Supporting Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace***
- ***Training and Development***
- ***Travelling and Subsistence***
- ***Violence and Aggression at Work***
- ***Working Alone out with the Office***

The Board is satisfied that the above Policies and Procedures are non-discriminatory and meet the Board's Equality Duties. However, the Board also recognises that it is important to continue to monitor these provisions and, supported by South Ayrshire Council, will continue to update these and develop new policies as required. Any new policies or amendments to existing policies will be impact assessed before implementation. Arrangements are in place to facilitate regular meetings with representatives from South Ayrshire Council to discuss these issues.

Recruitment and Selection

The Board operates a policy to ensure that recruitment and selection is undertaken within a framework which is fair, consistent, avoids discriminatory practices and provides equal access to all jobs. The policy incorporates a recruitment charter and also includes a commitment that any disabled applicant who satisfies the minimum requirements will be invited for interview. Prior to interview an Access To Interview Form is issued to all shortlisted candidates to ensure that adequate provisions can be made for them to attend.

In conjunction with this policy, provision has been made to monitor amongst other things the racial, gender, disability and marital status of both successful and unsuccessful applicants. This information is not available to the interview panel.

Equality Group

A Staff Equality Group has been established which meets to consider equality issues and how these can best be addressed in undertaking our statutory functions.

The Equality Group is made up of staff from all parts of the office in order that a fair and true representation of the office structure results. The Equality Group is chaired by an Assistant Assessor who will report the outcome of their discussions to the Management Team. Minutes of meetings are circulated to all staff and made freely available to all staff via an internal directory.

Service Plan

The Board has a Service Plan of which equalities form an important part. The Service Plan is a standing item on the agenda of the Assessors' monthly Management Team meetings. The Plan is therefore under constant review and monitoring. Any changes made are relayed to all staff via team briefings and the subsequent posting of Minutes on the Boards computer directories for all staff to read and comment upon.

Training

During current and ongoing spending restrictions, the funding of training for all staff is a difficult issue. Nevertheless, the Board does have a Training Group who are constantly reviewing the opportunities for additional training in equality issues.

The Board also has access to certain training packages, both face to face and on-line, which are supported by South Ayrshire Council. We are also grateful to South Ayrshire Council who provide us with access to their Equality and Diversity Officers.

Notwithstanding the above the Board recognises that additional equality training is required for all staff and this will be undertaken in-house.

Access to the Board's Premises

An assessment has been made of the suitability of the Board's premises for access by disabled people. It has been recognised that the original part of the building, being a traditional Georgian town house with a series of steps at the entrance, presents problems for disabled users. The internal stairs and broken layout of the interior of this part of the building does not lend itself to use by disabled persons e.g. for wheelchair use.

The modern extension to the rear of the building is accessed from pavement level and its open plan layout does lend itself to use by disabled persons. Prominent signage at the front of the building directs wheelchair users to the rear of the building where a parking space has been reserved for disabled clients and an access door, reception area and toilet suitable for disabled use has been provided.

The current layout and use of the Board's premises is under constant review by the Management Team, the Risk Assessment Group and the Office Accommodation Group.

Access to Information Published by the Board

The Board creates a number of publications which are available in hard copy. Facilities are available whereby these publications can be made available in different languages, in Braille or on audio tape on request.

The Board also publishes information on its website. Following a recent review the website has been upgraded to include the facility to increase font size and also includes a "brousealoud" speech enabled facility.

Communication with the Board

The Board has established that, other than English, the next most common languages spoken in Ayrshire are Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Urdu, Polish and Punjabi. The Board issues forms and notices in connection with Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Electoral Registration. The annual Electoral Registration Canvass Form and Revaluation and Valuation Notices now incorporate details in each of the above languages which advise recipients on how to proceed if translation services on the content of the form is required.

The Board recognises that we deal with a large volume of information that can, in certain circumstances, appear highly complex and technical. Access to the Board's literature and correspondence is an area we intend to look at in more detail in the Equality Outcomes section of this report.

Language Line

Board staff have access to the translation facilities provided through "Language Line". This is a telephone system, which can be accessed by staff who encounter members of the public whose first language is not English. All appropriate staff have received training in the use of language line.

Sign Language Interpreter

The use of a sign language interpreter is also available through South Ayrshire Council. An electronic hearing loop has been provided within the main reception area. This facility enables electronic signals to be connected directly to the hearing aid of deaf or hard of hearing customers. This hearing loop is portable and may be taken to other locations within the office if required.

Correspondence

A review has been undertaken of the size and type of font in which letters and other correspondence is issued by the Board. In line with recommendations, wherever possible correspondence is provided in Arial font size 12 to the benefit of partially sighted service users.

Suggestions Box

For some time now all staff have had access to a Suggestions Box and are encouraged to make suggestions that could improve the provision of our service to our customers and the working practices and environment of our staff. To date almost 350 suggestions have been made covering a wide variety of subjects, some of which are equalities related.

The Suggestions Box is opened on a monthly basis and each suggestion is discussed by the Management Team and the appropriate action taken.

Employee Interviews

In the past the Assessor has undertaken a number of private and confidential interviews with staff from all areas within the office. Where equalities issues have been raised these have either been dealt with by the Assessor or where appropriate referred to the Management Team for action.

Scottish Assessors' Association

The Assessor is a member of the Governance Committee of the Scottish Assessors' Association which has equality issues as a standing item on the Agenda of its regular meetings.

In brief, the Scottish Assessors' Association was instituted in 1886 and is a voluntary organisation where all Assessors and their senior staff are members. One of the functions of the Association is to facilitate consistency of approach in the administration of rating, council tax and electoral registration services throughout Scotland. Being a member of the Scottish Assessors' Association Governance Committee gives the Assessor, and his staff, the opportunity to share information on equality issues and agree best practices with colleagues from throughout Scotland.

Ayrshire Equalities Partnership

The Assistant Assessor responsible for equality and diversity issues is a member of the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership which is a multi agency partnership including each of the three Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Ayrshire Minorities Ethnic Community Association, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service, the local Ayrshire Colleges and Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board. Any issues raised as a result of attendance at the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership are reported to the Assessors' Management Team.

South Ayrshire Council Equalities Champions

The Assistant Assessor responsible for equality and diversity issues is part of the South Ayrshire Council Equality Champions Network which promotes equality across all Board and Council services. Equality Champions are drawn from a wide range of services and act as a key point of contact for employees who wish to raise issues relating to equality at work. Equality Champions meet quarterly and are undergoing a training programme to familiarise themselves with key issues affecting protected groups.

Any issues raised by attendance at the South Ayrshire Council Equality Champions Network are reported to the Assessors' monthly Management Team meeting.

Work Experience

On an annual basis the Board makes available, through the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, up to six places for young people, still in full time education, to gain training and work experience for a week at a time.

This facility, which requires substantial planning and preparation, gives an invaluable insight into the working environment of a busy office. In many instances the work experience includes field work where our young trainees gain experience of visiting many homes and businesses throughout Ayrshire where they meet all sectors of our community.

Appeals and Complaints to the Board

The Board has in place provisions whereby our service users may complain about the organisation and a form is available for this purpose.

The Board is also currently working on implementing the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Model Complaints Procedure, where equalities issues form an integral part.

Customer Feedback Survey

The Board issues customer feedback survey forms which request users of the service to comment upon aspects of the service they have received. Each of these forms now includes details of the gender, disability, racial and ethnic origin of the customer. Customer feedback forms are considered to determine whether they identify any equality issues that should be addressed.

The equalities monitoring question within the feedback form is currently being reviewed.

Impact Assessment

The Board adopts, wherever possible, the policies, practices and procedures of South Ayrshire Council. This includes, among others, policies concerning; Equalities, Recruitment and Selection, Respect at Work, Harassment and Bullying and Training and Development, etc.

The equality impact of the policies and procedures that the Board adopts from South Ayrshire Council will be assessed by South Ayrshire Council. Any changes arising from such impact assessment will be reflected by updating the Board's policies, practices and procedures in line with those of South Ayrshire Council.

The Board's Management Team will review the impact on equality groups of the practices and procedures followed in the exercise of its statutory functions which do not directly follow those of South Ayrshire Council at regular management meetings. Where the impacts arising from these practices and procedures are considered to be of high relevance a full impact analysis will be carried out in accordance with South Ayrshire Council's guidance.

Exit Interviews

The Board has procedures for Exit Interviews and all staff leaving the service are interviewed. Any equality related issues are highlighted and reported to the Management Team where appropriate.



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 2

WORKFORCE MONITORING

1.0 Introduction

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is committed to providing a workplace that embraces equalities issues and values diversity. We continually aim to create a workplace which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying and where all employees and the wider community we serve are treated with dignity and respect.

As indicated previously, as an employer, the Board has implemented many measures and actions the purpose of which is to create an inclusive working environment. We will continue support and review these measures in the hope that we can continue to improve on them. Some of the measures mentioned include the following:

- ***We have introduced a range of Policies and Procedures which promote equality at work, foster a positive working environment, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.***
- ***Equalities issues has for some time now been a standing item on agenda of the Assessors Senior Management Team meetings. The designated Equalities Officer reports on all relevant equalities issues at these regular meetings. Any equality and diversity issues are then cascaded down to all staff via team briefings and the resultant Minutes of the Assessor's Senior Management Team meetings which are made available to all staff.***
- ***Access to training on equalities and diversity issues are available to all staff.***
- ***The Assistant Assessor responsible for equality and diversity issues is part of the South Ayrshire Council Equality Champions Network which promotes equality across all Board and Council services.***
- ***The Assistant Assessor responsible for equality and diversity issues is a member of the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership.***
- ***The Assessor is a member of the Governance Committee of the Scottish Assessors' Association which has equality issues as a standing item on the Agenda of its regular meetings.***
- ***The Board makes available, through the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, up to six places per annum for young people, still in full time education, to gain training and work experience for a week at a time.***

Despite the above efforts we recognise that equalities is an ever evolving issue that requires a continuing commitment from all of our workforce. We need to continue to expand the knowledge of our workforce on equality issues and continue to embed all aspects of equality legislation in our service provision.

As recommended by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission one of the principal ways of gauging how effective our equality measures are is to monitor the composition of our workforce. Indeed the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which came into force in May 2012 requires us to gather and publish information on the composition of our workforce and on the recruitment, development and retention of our employees with respect to their protected characteristics.

It is further suggested in the Commissions guide "*Employee information and the public sector equality duty: A guide for public authorities (Scotland)*" that monitoring our workforce will help us to gain a better knowledge and understanding of the following issues.

- ***Identify key issues in employment.***
- ***Assess whether you are discriminating unlawfully in any of your employment functions and help identify action to remedy this.***
- ***Identify any actions you can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.***
- ***Understand the impact of your employment policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics and thereby plan them more effectively.***
- ***Consider taking steps to meet the needs of staff and potential staff who share relevant protected characteristics.***
- ***Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of your activities on equality.***
- ***Demonstrate to the public and to audit, scrutiny and regulatory bodies how you are performing on equality.***
- ***Assess performance against that of similar organisations, nationally or locally.***

The following analysis of our workforce will enable us to identify any equality issues that are specific to our workforce and thereafter to take whatever action is necessary to meet our responsibilities under the general duty which, of course, are:

- ***Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.***
- ***Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.***
- ***Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.***

We will use our workforce monitoring data to:

- ***Identify areas of occupational segregation by gender and consider measures to address these.***
- ***Identify any disparities in the profile of our workforce by protected characteristic.***
- ***Develop equality outcomes in accordance with the equality duty .***
- ***Identify gaps in workforce monitoring and suggest ways in which we can address and improve on these.***

The non statutory guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission referred to previously (*i.e. Employee information and the public sector equality duty: A guide for public authorities (Scotland)*) also recommends that organisations work towards gathering and using information disaggregated by protected characteristics on the following key areas:

- ***Recruitment and promotion.***
- ***Numbers of part-time and full-time staff.***
- ***Pay and remuneration.***
- ***Training and development.***
- ***Return to work of women on maternity leave.***
- ***Return to work of disabled employees following sick leave relating to their disability.***
- ***Grievances (including about harassment).***
- ***Disciplinary action (including for harassment).***
- ***Dismissals and other reasons for leaving.***

Where it is feasible, and where information exists, this report will consider each of the above key areas by specific reference to the protected characteristic. Where there are gaps in information gathering we will highlight these and comment on how we intend to fill these gaps and report our progress in the future.

REPORTING CATEGORIES

Prior to undertaking our workforce monitoring analysis it is worthwhile confirming the sources of our information and the basis in which it has been analysed.

Reporting categories on recruitment and selection are drawn from the National Recruitment Portal (myjobscotland) where categories have been agreed nationally across all local authorities.

Data for our workforce has been drawn in part from South Ayrshire Councils Oracle HR reporting tool and from our Staff Equalities Monitoring Questionnaire which was issued, returned and analysed during late February and early March 2013.

The workforce data used in the following analysis is current as at 1st March 2013. However, when considering certain issues such as recruitment and leavers the relevant data is based on the calendar year 2012 which is the latest year where we have complete data and is therefore the most relevant.

The Board currently has a total of 46 members of staff which is adjusted to a full time equivalent of 42.1 when flexible working practices are taken into account.

In the following analysis certain key areas, as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, will be considered in detail with specific reference to the protected characteristics. Where any additional analysis has been undertaken in a specific area this will be highlighted and discussed in the accompanying commentary.

The protected characteristics mentioned above are, of course:

- ***Gender***
- ***Age***
- ***Disability***
- ***Gender Reassignment***
- ***Marriage and Civil Partnership***
- ***Pregnancy and Maternity***
- ***Race***
- ***Religion or Belief***
- ***Sexual Orientation***

1.0 WORKFORCE

1.1 Profile of Workforce by Gender

WORKFORCE GENDER PROFILE				
Workforce Total	Male		Female	
46	15	32.61%	31	67.39%

1.2 Profile of Workforce by Work Pattern

WORKFORCE WORK PATTERN PROFILE				
Work Pattern	Male		Female	
Full Time	15	32.61%	21	45.65%
Reduced Hours			10	21.74%

Flexible working is a partnership between employer and employee and is subject to the demand for Board services. It is nevertheless encouraging to note that 22% of staff are benefiting from working flexibly. It is also very interesting to note that all staff who are currently working flexibly are female.

1.3 Profile of Workforce by Age

WORKFORCE AGE PROFILE				
Age Group	Male		Female	
16-17				
18-21				
22-30			2	4.35%
31-40	2	4.35%	2	4.35%
41-50	9	19.56%	15	32.61%
51-60	4	8.69%	12	26.09%
61-65				
66-70				
71+				

The age profile of Board staff is very heavily skewed towards those who are in excess of 41. Only two people (4%) are in the 22 – 30 age range and only six people are less than 40. The average age of all Board staff is 48. The age profile of our staff is an issue we will discuss further in our Equality Outcomes section.

1.4 Profile of Workforce by Disability

WORKFORCE DISABILITY PROFILE				
	Male		Female	
Identified as having a Disability			3	7.69%
Prefer Not to Say	1	2.56%		

Although three members of staff indicated positive for a disability, a total of two indicated an impairment.

WORKFORCE BY DISABILITY IMPAIRMENT PROFILE				
Disability Impairment	Male		Female	
Learning Disability				
Longstanding Illness			2	5.12%
Mental Health Condition				
Physical Impairment				
Sensory Impairment				
Other				
Prefer Not to Say	1	2.56%		
Unknown				
Blanks				

1.5 Profile by Gender Re-Assignment

WORKFORCE GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT PROFILE				
	Male		Female	
Identified as Re-Assignment				
Prefer Not to Say	1			

1.6 Profile of Workforce By Marriage and Civil Partnership

WORKFORCE MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP PROFILE				
Marital Status	Male		Female	
Single	1	2.56%	2	5.12%
Married/ Civil Partnership	7	17.95%	20	51.28%
Widowed				
Living With partner	2	5.12%	2	5.12%
Divorced/ Separated			3	7.69%
Prefer Not to Say	2	5.12%		

The vast majority of our staff (69%) are married or in a civil partnership and only 8% are single.

1.7 Profile of Workforce by National Identity and Ethnic Group

WORKFORCE BY NATIONAL IDENTITY PROFILE				
	Male		Female	
British			1	2.56%
Scottish	11	28.21%	23	58.98%
English			1	2.56%
Welsh				
Northern Irish			1	2.56%
Other			1	2.56%
Prefer Not to Say	1	2.56%		

87% of our workforce have identified themselves as Scottish with only three other members of staff positively identifying themselves as something other than Scottish.

WORKFORCE BY ETHNIC GROUP PROFILE					
		Male		Female	
White	Scottish	11	28.21%	23	58.98%
	Other British			4	10.25%
	Irish				
	Gypsy/Traveller				
	Polish				
	Other white ethnic group,				
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group	Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups				
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British				
	Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British				
	Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British				
	Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British				
	Other				
African	African, African Scottish, African British				
	Other				
Caribbean or Black	Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British				
	Black, Black Scottish or Black British				
	Other				
Other Ethnic Group	Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British				
	Other				
Prefer Not to Say		1	2.56%		

97% of our staff have positively identified themselves as having a Scottish or Other British ethnic profile with only one member of staff preferring not to say.

1.8 Profile of Workforce By Religion or Belief

WORKFORCE RELIGION OR BELIEF PROFILE				
Religion or Belief	Male		Female	
Buddhist				
Christian (including Church of Scotland, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian Denominations)	6	15.39%	21	53.85%
Hindu				
Jewish				
Muslim				
No Religion or Belief	5	12.82%	6	15.38%
Sikh				
Pagan				
Other Religion or Belief				
Prefer Not to Say	1	2.56%		
Unknown				

1.9 Profile of Workforce By Sexual Orientation

WORKFORCE SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE				
Sexual Orientation	Male		Female	
Bisexual				
Gay				
Heterosexual/Straight	11	28.21%	27	69.23%
Lesbian				
Prefer Not to Say	1	2.56%		
Unknown				
Blanks				

Over 97% of our staff have identified themselves as being heterosexual/straight.

1.10 Profile of Workforce by Occupational Segregation By Grade

WORKFORCE OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GRADE PROFILE				
Pay Grade	Male		Female	
Grades 1-5	1	2.17%	11	23.92%
Grades 6-8	1	2.17%	12	26.09%
Grades 9-10	6	13.04%	3	6.52%
Grade 11 and above	7	15.22%	5	10.87%

1.11 Profile of Workforce by Section and Gender

WORKFORCE BY SECTION AND GENDER PROFILE						
	All Staff		Male		Female	
Administrative	23	50.00%	1	2.17%	22	47.83%
Technical	18	39.13%	10	21.74%	8	17.39%
Management	5	10.87%	4	8.70%	1	2.17%

There is a very obvious and noticeable gender imbalance within our Administrative section where out of a total of 23 staff 22 are female. This is an issue we will discuss in greater detail in our Equalities Outcomes section.

It is encouraging to note that within our Technical section there is a reasonable gender balance which is very much at odds with the general perception of the Surveying industry.

2.0 RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION INFORMATION

2.1 Profile of Recruitment by Gender

RECRUITMENT BY GENDER PROFILE			
Gender	Percentage of Total Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Male	26.61%	38.46%	50.00%
Female	73.39%	61.54%	50.00%
Prefer Not to Say			
Blanks			
Unknown			

During 2012 we recruited two new members of staff, one male and one female. Our new male colleague joined the Technical section and our new female colleague joined the Administrative section.

2.2 Profile of Recruitment by Work Pattern

RECRUITMENT BY WORK PATTERN PROFILE		
Work Pattern	Male	Female
Full Time	50.00%	50.00%
Reduced Hours		

2.3 Profile of Recruitment by Year of Birth

RECRUITMENT BY YEAR OF BIRTH PROFILE			
Year of Birth	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
1995 and after	0.31%		
1994-1988	29.05%	9.09%	
1987-1978	23.24%		50.00%
1977-1968	17.13%	27.28%	
1967-1958	18.65%	36.36%	
1957-1953	8.26%	18.18%	50.00%
1952 and before	1.83%	9.09%	
Blanks	1.53%		

2.4 Profile of Recruitment By Disability

RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY PROFILE			
Disability	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Disabled	1.83%	9.09%	
Not disabled	50.46%	54.55%	50.00%
Prefer Not To Say	0.31%		
Blanks	47.40%	36.36%	50.00%

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board gives a commitment to interview any applicant for employment who meets the minimum requirement for the job and has declared they are disabled.

RECRUITMENT BY DISABILITY IMPAIRMENT			
Disability Impairment	Percentage of Disabled Applicants	Percentage of Total Disabled Applicants Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Disabled Applicants Successful Appointments
Learning Disability	13.33%		
Longstanding Illness	53.33%	100.00%	
Mental Health Condition	6.67%		
Physical Impairment	26.67%		
Sensory Impairment			
Other			
Prefer Not to Say			
Unknown			
Blanks			

2.5 Profile of Recruitment By Gender Re-Assignment

RECRUITMENT BY GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT PROFILE			
Transgender or Transperson	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Yes			
No			
Prefer Not to Say			
Blanks			
Unknown			
Filed not compatible			

We have no information with respect to recruitment by gender re-assignment.

2.6 Profile of Recruitment by Marriage and Civil Partnership

RECRUITMENT BY MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP PROFILE			
Marital Status	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Single	54.43%	15.38%	50.00%
Married/ Civil Partnership	22.94%	61.55%	50.00%
Widowed	0.62%		
Living With partner	10.70%	7.69%	
Divorced/ Separated	10.09%	15.38%	
Prefer Not to Say	0.61%		
Unknown	0.61%		
Blanks			

2.7 Profile of Recruitment by Race

RECRUITMENT BY RACE PROFILE			
Ethnic Group	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
White-Scottish	90.52%	92.31%	100.00%
White-other British	5.50%	7.69%	
White-Irish	0.31%		
White-Polish	1.22%		
White-Gypsy/Traveller			
White – Eastern European			
White – other white ethnic group	0.61%		
Mixed or multiple	0.31%		
Asian – Pakistani (inc Scottish/British)			
Asian-Indian(inc Scottish/British)			
Asian-Bangladeshi(inc Scottish/British)			
Asian-Chinese(inc Scottish/British)			
Asian – other(inc Scottish/British)			
African(inc Scottish/British)			
African-other			
Caribbean(inc Scottish/British)			
Black(inc Scottish/British)			
Caribbean or Black (other)			
Other-Arab(inc Scottish/British)	0.31%		
Other	0.61%		
Prefer Not to Say			
Unknown	0.61%		

2.8 Profile of Recruitment by Religion or Belief

RECRUITMENT BY RELIEGION OF BELIEF PROFILE			
Religion or Belief	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Buddhist			
Church of Scotland	35.17%	38.46%	50.00%
Hindu			
Humanist			
Jewish			
Muslim			
None	39.14%	23.09%	50.00%
Other Christian	6.43%	15.38%	
Sikh			
Pagan			
Roman Catholic	9.79%	7.69%	
Prefer Not to Say	7.03%	15.38%	
Other Religion or Belief	1.83%		
Unknown	0.61%		

2.9 Profile of Recruitment by Sexual Orientation

RECRUITMENT BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE			
Sexual Orientation	Percentage of Applications	Percentage of Total Selected For Interview	Percentage of Total Successful Appointments
Bisexual	0.31%		
Gay	0.92%		
Straight	94.18%	100.00%	100.00%
Lesbian	0.61%		
Prefer Not to Say	3.06%		
Other	0.00%		
Unknown	0.92%		

3.0 TRAINING

3.1 Profile of Workforce Training by Gender

WORKFORCE TRAINING ATTENDANCE BY GENDER PROFILE				
	Total Staff		No. of Courses Attended	
Male	15	32.61%	33	57.89%
Female	31	67.39%	24	42.11%

On the surface it may appear to be of concern that 33% of the workforce (i.e. males) benefitted from 58% of the available training whilst the female members of staff who comprise 67% of all staff benefitted from only 42% of the available training. However, underlying the above statistics is the fact that a few male members of the Technical section are currently studying for professional qualifications and therefore undertook a disproportionate amount of training (see further analysis below). It should also be noted that a number of training courses attended by management were the result of a recent restructuring which required additional training to be provided concerning e.g. Freedom of Information, Equalities and Complaints Handling.

3.2 Profile of Workforce Training by Section

WORKFORCE TRAINING ATTENDANCE BY SECTION PROFILE						
	Total Staff	No. of Courses attended	Male		Female	
Administrative	23	15	1	6.67%	14	93.33%
Technical	18	27	19	70.37%	8	29.63%
Management	5	15	13	86.67%	2	13.33%

3.3 Profile of Workforce Training by Grade

WORKFORCE TRAINING ATTENDANCE BY GRADE PROFILE						
Pay Grade	Male			Female		
	Total Staff	No. of Courses attended	%	Total Staff	No. of Courses attended	%
Grades 1-5	1	1	1.75%	11	7	12.28%
Grades 6-8	1	6	10.53%	12	8	14.04%
Grades 9-10	6	14	24.56%	3	3	5.26%
Grade 11 and above	7	12	21.05%	5	6	10.53%

4.0 WORKFORCE LEAVERS

4.1 Profile of Workforce Leavers by Reason and Gender

WORKFORCE LEAVERS BY REASON AND GENDER PROFILE		
Reason For Leaving	Male	Female
Deceased	0	0
Dismissal	0	0
End of Contract	0	0
End of Temp Contract (Funding Ceased)	0	1
End of Temp Contract (Post holder returned to work)	0	0
Resigned	4	2
Retiral (Efficiency)	0	0
Retiral (Ill Health)	1	0
Retiral (Option)	0	0
Voluntary Retiral	0	0
Voluntary Severance	0	0
Unknown	0	0

In accordance with the Board's Policy and Procedure – "Exit Interviews", all staff leaving the service are expected to undertake an exit interview. With the exception of one individual who retired through ill health, all staff leaving the service undertook an exit interview.

As a result of the exit interviews it has been confirmed that there are no equality issues with those who left the service during 2012.

5.0 GRIEVANCE

During the calendar year 2012, there were no grievance issues by any member of staff. Despite this it is recognised that this is an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, workforce grievance issues will continue to be monitored closely.

6.0 DISCIPLINARY

During the calendar year 2012, there were no disciplinary issues dealt with by the Board. Despite this it is recognised that this is an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, workforce disciplinary issues will continue to be monitored closely.

7.0 RESPECT AT WORK

During the calendar year 2012, there were no issues raised with respect to the Board's Respect at Work Policy and Procedure. Despite this it is recognised that this is also an important area that could have equalities issues. Accordingly, Respect at Work issues will continue to be monitored closely.

8.0 RETURN TO WORK OF WOMEN ON MATERNITY LEAVE

During the calendar year 2012, there were no members of staff returning to work following maternity leave. However, in accordance with our existing Policy and Procedure - "*Maternity, Adoption and Paternity leave and Pay*" this important issue will continue to be monitored closely and reported on accordingly.

9.0 RETURN TO WORK OF DISABLED EMPLOYEES FOLLOWING SICK LEAVE RELATING TO THEIR DISABILITY

During the calendar year 2012, we had one disabled member of staff returning to work following sick leave relating to their disability. This person returned to work on a phased basis after consultation with Occupational Health and their Line Manager.

It is recognised that this is an important area that has equality implications and will therefore continue to be closely monitored and any appropriate reporting and consequential action taken.

10.0 PROCUREMENT

Regulation 9 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, imposes a duty on public bodies when considering award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement, to have due regard to whether the award criteria should include considerations which will help it meet its Equality Duty. Any such award criteria should be related to and proportionate to the subject matter of the proposed agreement.

Currently the Board enters into very few procurement contracts directly. Contracts of any substance are normally procured on behalf of the Board by South Ayrshire Council and are subject to their procurement procedures in accordance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Any contracts that the Board does enter into directly are generally small in terms of the service procured and the monetary value of that service. Notwithstanding, the Board will have due regard to whether the award criteria should include considerations to enable us to better perform the Equality duty. By having due regard to the above, the Board can satisfy its requirements under Regulation 9 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS ON OUR WORKFORCE MONITORING

Section 6 of the non statutory guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission *Employee information and the public sector equality duty: A guide for public authorities (Scotland)* offers advice to public authorities on how to use employee information that they ingathered and analysed.

It suggests that any analysed employee information that is produced may lead a public authority to consider the areas where gaps are apparent and where improvements can be made. The envisaged improvements include enabling and encouraging people who share a protected characteristic to;

- ***Overcome or minimise a disadvantage connected to that characteristic,***
- ***Meet any needs that are different from the needs of those who do not share that characteristic, or***
- ***Participate in an activity where their participation is disproportionately low.***

Undertaking this analysis has highlighted a number issues which we need to consider in the light of our equalities responsibilities. Issues such as the composition of our workforce, our recruitment activities and our provision of training.

Given the size of our organisation and the nature of our service being heavily prescribed by statute it was almost inevitable that some of our Equality Outcomes would result from our workforce monitoring analysis, and that is exactly what has happened. In the following part of this report we will take the two key issues highlighted from our workforce monitoring analysis, namely the lack of young people working for us and the gender imbalance in our Administrative section, and develop these into Equality Outcomes.



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Public Sector Equality Duty

PART 3

EQUALITY OUTCOMES

Equality Outcome 1

Young people have a greater representation within our workforce.

Inequality Problem

- Having undertaken our workforce monitoring analysis, it is apparent that young people are grossly under represented within our workforce.
- We have no staff who are less than 21.
- Only two members of staff (4%) are between 22 and 30.
- 51% of our staff are between 41 and 50 and 34% between 51 and 60.
- Our youngest employee is 26 which means that 98% of our staff are in excess of 26.
- The Scottish Government have identified that youth employment is a key priority. Within their strategy document "*Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy*" they indicate that ". . .since the downturn, we have seen unemployment among 16 – 24 year olds in Scotland rise from 55,000 to over 100,000. This increase of 83% reflects a pattern repeated across many developed economies".
- In their strategy document, the Scottish Government also state that "*Beyond the financial costs, the human and societal costs of youth unemployment are considerable. There are often mental and physical health consequences, the risk of offending increases and there are clear links between inter-generational social problems and long term unemployment. This is a price we cannot afford to pay as a society. It is in everyone's interests to ensure that our young people have the best possible start to their working lives*".

Equality Outcome

- Young people have a greater representation within our workforce.

General Equality Duty

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Activities

- We will consult with young people and identify any actions we can take to assist them gain employment.
- We will continue to offer workplace experience to young people still in full time education and consider opportunities to participate in Government schemes such as Young Apprenticeships etc.
- We will consult, either using our own resources or in conjunction with South Ayrshire Council, with local schools, colleges and universities and identify any actions, when the opportunity arises, that we can take to attract school leavers and graduates.
- In conjunction with the national web portal, myjobscotland, we will consider additional means of attracting young people to vacant positions within our service e.g. local newspapers, job fairs etc.
- We will consider expanding our efforts to raise the profile of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board, particularly towards young people through media sources they are familiar with e.g. our web site, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

Output

- More young people find employment with Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.

Note

In setting this equality outcome it is recognised that Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is a small organisation with limited staff numbers (46 in total). It follows that the take on of new staff, particularly in the current economic climate, is very small indeed and that consequently the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a short space of time is limited.

Equality Outcome 2

Gender segregation within our Clerical/Administration section is improved.

Inequality Problem

- Within our Clerical/Administration section there is a very marked and obvious issue concerning gender segregation.
- We have 23 members of staff employed in the Clerical section, 22 are female and 1 is male.
- The Clerical/Administration section represents 50% of the total workforce, therefore, the gender segregation evident there is not insignificant.
- Whilst there is evidence of gender segregation within the Management Team, this is affecting a much smaller group and therefore does not directly affect as many staff.

General Equality Duty

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and,
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Activities

- In conjunction with Equality Outcome 1, we will endeavour to employ more suitably qualified men in our Administration/Clerical section.
- In the first instance we will work with our staff to overcome the wrongly perceived view that clerical/administrative duties are for women.
- We will consider advertising any vacant posts in a range of alternative media sources such as local newspapers, Schools, Universities, Colleges etc.
- We will consult with the Human Resources department of our lead authority to look at ways of attracting more males to clerical roles.
- We will continue to offer workplace experience to young people still in full time education

Output

- More males are employed in our Clerical/Administration service.

Note

In setting this equality outcome it is recognised that Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is a small organisation with limited staff numbers (46 in total). It follows that the take on of new staff, particularly in the current economic climate, is very small indeed and that consequently the opportunity to significantly alter the staff profile over a short space of time is limited.

Equality Outcome 3

Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to, all members of our community.

Inequality Problem

- We recently published a report on the analysis of customer questionnaires issued by us during 2011. The “Report on the Issue of Customer Questionnaires” identified that 97% of customers visiting us indicated there was ease of access to our premises. Although this is very high, it is down on the previous report and as a result we should consider why 3% of our customers visiting our premises had some form of difficulty accessing the building.
- The same report also found that whilst 70% of customers visiting us found that our opening hours were ‘very convenient’, 27% found our opening hours were ‘fairly convenient’ and 3% were ‘not very convenient’. We need to investigate how we can improve accessibility to our services.
- In March 2010, the Electoral Commission published their report “*The Completeness and Accuracy of Electoral Registers in Great Britain*”. In this report they concluded, with respect to people not registering to vote, that “*Under-registration and inaccuracy are closely associated with the groups most likely to move home. Across seven case study areas in phase two . . . under registration is notably higher than average among 17-24 year olds (56% not registered), private sector tenants (49%) and black and minority ethnic (BME) British residents (31%)*”.
- It is very significant that one of the pilot areas taking part in the above survey was South Ayrshire. If the pattern developed in South Ayrshire is repeated in North and East Ayrshire it is possible to conclude that in Ayrshire 56% of 17-24 year olds have chosen not to register to vote and 49% of black and minority ethnic British residents have also chosen not to register to vote.

General Equality Duty

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Activities

- We will continue to undertake Customer Questionnaire Surveys.
- We will follow up on all concerns highlighted to us with respect to facilities available to customers who visit us.
- We will review access and egress to our premises.
- Where customers are intending to visit us, we will consider how we can make it more convenient for them.
- We will consider increasing the use of language insert leaflets with outgoing questionnaires, forms and correspondence.
- We will consider if we can use plainer and less technical language in certain questionnaires and forms issued by us.
- In order to convince more young people and BME British residents to vote we will undertake some or all of the following ;
 - Increase public awareness by participating in bespoke television and radio advertising.
 - A ready made electoral registration advertisement has been purchased which can be used on a variety of media displays. We will consider the use of such advertisements on our website, partner organisation websites, LCD screens in public buildings and/or uploaded to Youtube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
 - Advertising in local newspapers and youth magazines such as “The Scene”.
 - Liaise closely with the local authority Education Departments to obtain names and addresses of young people or young attainers eligible to be added to the Electoral Register.
 - Visit further education colleges and universities.
 - Ensure that language insert leaflets are included with all outgoing Electoral Registration correspondence.
 - Continue to highlight that all correspondence is available in alternative forms such audio tape, Braille, etc.
 - Continue to highlight that Language Line is available.
 - Continue to work with the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership to promote registration.
 - Maintain our “brousealoud” speech enabled facility on our website.

Outputs

- Improved accessibility to all Board services by our customers.
- More BME British Voters are registered to vote.
- More 17-24 year olds are registered to vote.